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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/573,213	01/16/2007	Heinz Bauer	04150.0027U1	4996
23850 7590 09/30/2009 Ballard Spahr LLP SUITE 1000 999 PEACHTREE STREET ATLANTA, GA 30309-3915				
EXAMINER PETTTTT, JOHN F				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3744				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
09/30/2009		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/573,213

Applicant(s)

BAUER ET AL.

Examiner

John F. Pettitt

Art Unit

3744

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 March 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SG/US)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-9, drawn to a method of liquefaction of a hydrocarbon rich flow wherein the liquefaction is effected by a refrigerant circuit cascade consisting of three refrigeration circuits, a first refrigeration circuit providing preliminary cooling, a second refrigeration circuit providing the liquefaction, and a third refrigeration circuit providing sub-cooling, whereby each refrigeration circuit comprises at least one compressor, wherein at least one part of flow of the second refrigeration circuit is used for preliminary cooling.

Group II, claim(s) 10, drawn to a method of liquefying a hydrocarbon rich gas, wherein the gas flows through a cascade of three refrigeration stages, each stage comprising a refrigerant circuit and a compressor, wherein at least part flow of refrigerant from a second circuit is used for preliminary cooling of the gas in the first refrigeration stage.

Group III, claim(s) 11-14, drawn to a method of liquefaction comprising a plurality of cooling circuits arranged in a cascade formation, each circuit comprising a compressor, wherein each compressor has an equal share of a total load.

Group IV, claim(s) 15-24, drawn to a load balanced mixed refrigerant cascade process comprising a carbon dioxide pre-cooling circuit.

Group V, claim(s) 25, drawn to an LNG liquefaction process comprising three cascade cycles each driven by a compressor, wherein each compressor is equally loaded and one of the cycles is a carbon dioxide cycle.

Group VI, claim(s) 26, drawn to a method of liquefaction of a hydrocarbon rich flow, whereby the liquefaction is effected against a refrigerant circuit cascade consisting of three mixed refrigeration circuits, whereby a first of the three serves to provide preliminary cooling, a second of the three provides the liquefaction, and a third of the three provides sub-cooling; and whereby each circuit comprises

a compressor, and wherein at least one part flow of a refrigerant of the second refrigeration circuit is used for the preliminary cooling.

The inventions listed as Groups I - VI do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: As evidenced by Low (US 5,473,900) hereafter Low who teaches a mixed refrigerant cascade process (Figure 1; column 3, lines 36-45). Therefore, as the same features fail to be a special technical feature, the inventions clearly lack unity.

This application contains claims directed to more than one species of the generic invention. If the applicant elects any of the groups above, the applicant is further required to elect one of the following species:

The species are as follows:

Species A - Fig. 1 - having unequally loaded compressors

Species B - Fig. 2 - having equally loaded compressors and turbine expanders

Species C - Fig. 4 - having equally loaded compressors and a CO₂ pre-cooling circuit.

These species are deemed to lack unity of invention because they are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. Applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single species to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. The reply must also identify the claims readable on the elected species, including any claims subsequently added.

An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered non-responsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

The claims are deemed to correspond to the species listed above in the following manner:

Species I - claims 9, 26

Species II - claims 7, 11-14

Species III - claims 8, 11-25

The following claim(s) are generic: 1-6, 10.

The species listed above do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, the species lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: As evidenced by Low, who teaches a process having three mixed refrigerants in a cascade formation (Figure 1; column 3, lines 36-45), therefore, the same features between the species fail to be a special technical feature and the inventions clearly lack unity..

A telephone call was made to Sumner Rosenberg on September 14, 2009 to request an oral election to the above restriction requirement, but did not result in an election being made.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To preserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John F. Pettitt whose telephone number is 571-272-0771. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8a-4p.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cheryl Tyler or Frantz Jules can be reached on 571-272-4834 or 571-272-6681. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John F Pettitt /
Examiner, Art Unit 3744

/Cheryl J. Tyler/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 3744

JFP III
September 14, 2009